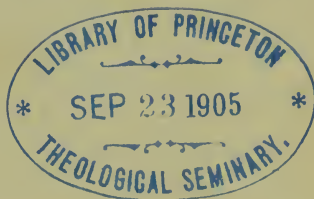


BIBLICAL CRITICISM

BY THE LATE

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BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

BY THE LATE
RIGHT REV. WILLIAM STUBBS, D.D.

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in 1893, and from Ordination Addresses of the Bishop.]*

WITH PREFACE
BY
PROFESSOR MONTAGU BURROWS, M.A.

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE TRACT COMMITTEE.

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WORKS BY THE
RIGHT REV. WILLIAM STUBBS, D.D.,

Formerly Bishop of Oxford.

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PREFACE.

THE Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge has, at my suggestion, sought from the Publishers, Messrs. Longmans, and obtained permission, to put forth in a separate form certain pages, on the subject of the so-called Higher Criticism, extracted from their recently issued "Charges" and "Addresses" of the late Bishop Stubbs. These excerpts seemed too valuable to be lost in the midst of matter which, however excellent, was not likely to be extensively read, at least by laymen. Their usefulness for the present time consists not only in their evidence of the heartfelt sense entertained by the Bishop of the perils of reckless criticism, but in the fact that this evidence proceeds from one whom many consider to have been the greatest historian the English people possessed in the nineteenth century. Such a man has earned a right to say, "We cannot treat Holy Scripture as any other book, even if it were susceptible of such treatment; but it is like no other, and the fact that it is like no other has led critics to apply to it methods of arbitrary, wanton, and conjectural criticism which, if applied to Greek or Roman, or even Anglo-Saxon literature, would be laughed out of court."—Charges, p. 142.

The extracts have been printed in the order of subjects in spite of the repetition which is the occasional result.

MONTAGU BURROWS.

OXFORD, *Jan.* 13, 1905.

CONTENTS.



	PAGE
HIGHER CRITICISM	5
THE KENOSIS	27
THE MIRACULOUS IN THE BIBLE	36
THE STUDY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES	45
THE PSALMS	61

BIBLICAL CRITICISM.



HIGHER CRITICISM.

SECOND VISITATION CHARGE, APRIL AND
MAY, 1893, *p.* 138.

OF important topics you will not be surprised to hear that I regard as the most important the discussions on the higher criticism of the Old Testament Scripture, and the resulting, but even more directly absorbing question, how far the results of that criticism may be allowed to affect the doctrine of the Incarnation, especially in relation to the fulness and perfection of our Lord's knowledge. Three years ago, in my first charge, I ventured to advise that, in the contemplation of these questions, we should do well to maintain an attitude of calmness, patience, and tolerance for a developing view; whilst holding firmly—and it is only by those who do hold firmly that such calmness, patience, and tolerance can be maintained—whilst holding firmly the divine

authority of scripture, and the perfect knowledge, as well as the perfect power, of the Son of God Incarnate. I certainly was inclined at the time to be hopeful, that God, who knows the hearts of those who raise these questions, and sees the faith and sincerity of their treatment, would guide, as time went on, their investigations and speculations to the confirmation of the faith of others, to edification rather than to the increase of doubts, difficulties, and negations, amongst earnest inquirers after truth.

Now, however, whilst I would still urge the calmness, patience, and tolerance as before, I confess that I do not see that the dangers which I apprehend have become less dangerous than they were, or the crisis of belief less critical. Time has been given for the explanation of difficulties, and they have not been explained: opportunity for the reconciliation of inconsistencies, and they have not been reconciled: occasion, ample occasion, for the reconstruction of affirmative arguments which seemed to be impaired by the negative character of the criticism, and they are, to say the least, very slow, indeed, in the process of reconstruction. Meanwhile, the leaven of misgiving has spread: the sermons preached in churches, where better things might be expected, have, in the mouths of some of the younger clergy, I fear, taken an apologetic and attenuating tone with regard to the great features of the faith: and the popular foible, that nothing should be believed against which any objection could or can be raised—a weakness of public sense, which gives to the argument of negation

a preponderant importance before discussion is fairly begun—has spread accordingly. Manuals of theology are drawn up and circulated, in which these difficulties have a place, and find far too irresolute and indeterminate handling ; matters are treated as conclusively proved that are only negatively mooted, and the true suspensive attitude of real criticism is superseded by the assumption that everything requires to be re-stated and re-proved.

I have no wish to say anything severe of the scholars whose work has conduced to these painful stages of theological thought ; for real results, I fain would hope, they are not. I believe that in many cases, certainly in all the cases of men with whom I am personally acquainted, it is the very strength of the conviction that the verities of the faith must come out unimpaired from the ordeal with which they are being tested, that makes them bold in the handling of matters which men of less vivid convictions would handle more cautiously. I admire the strength of their convictions, but I grieve over the short-sightedness, and I had almost said the self-will or absolute selfishness, of their procedure. A man may sometimes, by reason of his own strong conviction and faith in his own cause, overstate the case of the adversary to a degree that is very dangerous to those who, with all candour, are not blessed with the same strength of conviction or the same knowledge. A man's humility will occasionally blind him to the fact that he may unintentionally be misleading those to whom his sincerity and humility constitute a strong attraction. Rash confidence and too

generous display of candour will never justify us in understating the merits of the cause which we have to defend, or in contenting ourselves with incompletely realising the issues of our points and methods of controversy : whether it be the question of Inspiration, or the Roman Catholic question, or of Education, or any other that touches the life of man. In such matters the theologian must be more than the mere lawyer or the mere logician. Souls are at stake ; and no one can deceive himself with the belief that the want of sympathy and care for others can be excused by the finesse of the advocate or the assumed impartiality of the impetuous critic, or even by the ingenuous setting forth of the difficulty which the writer has of making clear to himself his own convictions.

But I will say something now of the questions, rather than of the school of students that are raising them. Most of us can remember the cry that was raised thirty years ago about the Bible being treated like any other book, and of the good men who tried to believe that if it were so treated the result would be that its divine character and authority would come out all the clearer from the treatment. I have no doubt that if it were so treated, that would be the result ; and perhaps, by-and-by, when the bonds of old faith and the new elasticity of emancipated thought have changed their present form and character as forces of action and reaction, it may come to pass. But I do not expect to live to see it ; and to men who have lived and worked and looked on so long as I have, it seems impossible that the Bible could ever be

treated so. The Bible is not like any other book ; no other book comes to us with a claim authorised by the Church of our Baptism as containing the Word of God ; or containing so constant assertion of its claim to be heard as the Word of God ; or as cited, one part of it by another part, by a sort of mutual testimony, as of divine authority, or as consistently upheld by the long consent of the Christian ages as the Law and the Testimony. So it comes to us, and it is not reduced to the level of other books even by the complete repudiation of every point of this claim at the hands of those who would treat it otherwise. This means that it is to us a paramount witness of truth : if it fail, that is, if the Lord Jesus is not, in it and through it all, the key and binding-string and central truth that holds it all together, then the result of its promulgation is the most ghastly of all delusions and disappointments by which all the best instincts of human nature have ever been repelled and belied ; it is a phantasm, by which He who would deceive us or let us deceive ourselves to our own destruction would be no fit object of worship, even if such a person exist at all : a book which comes to us thus cannot be like any other.

But, secondly, our own relation to it is such that we cannot look upon it so. We have been brought up in profound respect for it and love of it. We have been taught to base all our faith in the unseen world upon it ; our convictions or anticipations of eternity ; our belief in immortality ; our ideas of the government of the world, of the

existence of God, of the law of life, right, and virtue; of our own subjection to and inability to keep that law; of the love that provided a way to forgiveness and restoration; of the work of the atonement, of the Incarnation and the sacrifice; of the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment; of the destiny of our own souls and of theirs, without whom happiness in its true perfection is altogether inconceivable; in a word, our knowledge, if we call it knowledge, our apprehension, if we dare not call it knowledge, of all that is desirable, hopeful, and other than miserable in this life and that which is to follow it. The whole form and character of our religious thought is framed on it; all has come to us through the teaching of this book, or through the teaching of the Church which bases its authority and teaching upon it. It is impossible for those who have been so taught to put themselves into a neutral or impartial attitude regarding it, without such a strain, such a wrench of mental and moral force, as drives them past the central station of fair judgment. The effort that carries us so far carries us further. Indifference to Holy Scripture means disregard for it: we cannot treat it as any other book even if it were susceptible of such treatment; but it is like none other, and, indeed, it is the fact that it is like no other that has led critics to apply to it methods of arbitrary, wanton, and conjectural criticism, which, applied to Greek or Roman, or even Anglo-Saxon literature, would be laughed out of court.

But do not think that there is not something to be said on the other side. First, the Bible, although

speaking with authority, speaks with an authority that contemplates proof and deliberate acceptance; and, secondly, we, unless our acceptance is to be servile and abjectly unintelligent, are bound to do our utmost to realise both what we believe and why we believe it. That is to say, the Book itself recognises, and we by our very constitution of thought and affection are bound to the exercise of what it recognises, the necessity of judgment, the proving and holding fast.

Now if these two considerations formed a dilemma, the only possible attitude of fair thought would be one that, long before now, would have set the Bible, and all religious ideas drawn from it, outside the region of practical questioning: either it must be accepted with the mechanical receptiveness of an empty vessel, or it must be treated as on a level with a leading article: it must long ago have lost the hold on the heart which, humanly speaking, is the result of nineteen centuries of faith. There is no such dilemma: so much is clear to our apprehension of what is going on in the world now, in commentary, in controversy, in exposition, in inspiration. The practical lesson is the inculcation of a habit of moral or spiritual, and mental or intellectual effort. Morally and spiritually we must try to approach the study with a living and loving sense of what we owe to our Bible; grateful acceptance and prayer for guidance; trustful receptiveness: whatever mental trials await us in it, we hold our Bible as the gift of our Lord's love, with a desire to prove true that which we humbly believe that the guidance of the Holy Spirit disposes us

to believe as true. The effort must be trustful ; it must also be patient ; longing to see clearer but conscious of its own imperfection, ready to work sincerely, candidly, industriously, and also waiting humbly on what may be the divine reticence in revelation : recognising contradictions that we cannot reconcile, looking down promising vistas of loving anticipation that seem for the present to close in obscurity ; analysing records of events and prophecies of events, that need to be brought into correlation with each other and with the general purpose of Revelation, and with the course of the history of the Church and of the world. The patient attitude will not be shaken, either by the impetuosity of spiritual devotion or by intolerance of intellectual suspense. And a third point is humility ; the sense of our own fallibility in faith and apprehension of truth, our human and personal ignorance.

Every one, I imagine, would grant this much on the moral and spiritual side. But how about the mental or intellectual attitude of the believing critic ? Here comes the great difficulty. Given a book which, as I have said, on its own claims and on the grounds of our personal relation to it, is unlike any other book, how can we criticise it ? Does criticism really require a position of such indifference as amounts to unfriendliness ? Must all criticism begin with negation ? How about the parallels and analogies of other literatures and histories on which the laws of criticism must, if they are to have comparative value, be framed ; how about the nature of the proof which is to be

demand, and with or without which the mind of the student, studying trustfully and lovingly, is or is not to be contented? How about theories of inspiration, and the questions of scientific, literary, and historic investigation? And what of the relation between spiritual devotional study, and the results of these sorts of questionings? We cannot say that these are simple considerations, or that it is easy to formulate answers that will answer all the questions that are suggested by them. There is a criticism which analyses and distinguishes in the hope of making that which is obscure in belief clear and coherent. There is another which, beginning from an untrustful starting-point, calls everything into question, assumes the validity of every negative suggestion, almost the equal cogency of every new conjecture. There is a criticism which is a very wantonness of experimental curiosity. There is a need of distinction and caution in calling these by the same name.

But now, first, we have to remember that, as different subject-matters are only susceptible of or amenable to different methods of proof, we must not look for equal cogency in all conclusions from the tests of evidence applied to the Bible, either in its several parts, or as compared with other books. It is only in mathematical matters that perfect demonstration can be secured, and the Bible is not a mathematical book. Next in degree to mathematical demonstration comes the sort of proof that natural science or physical science uses. Some of the weapons alleged against the theories of inspiration of the Bible are drawn from the scientific

armoury ; such, for instance, are those connected with the theory of creation and the doctrine of evolution. With regard to these, which lie rather across the line that I am taking, I must so far digress as to say that scientific terms are used in the Bible only for the purpose of helping a revelation of the power and energy and will of Almighty God ; a revelation which, to be a revelation at all, must be made in language intelligible to those to whom it was made, and which must accordingly be open to the limitations of human speech and language. As it is a growing revelation, its language is liable to variety of interpretation, as the knowledge of the laws of nature increases, and that interpretation is susceptible of readjustment. The original word, cleared of the incrustation of successive interpretations, is simple, and, its purpose being admitted, lies outside of scientific criticism. Evolution, if it be true, is but what one may call the grammar of the book of nature : an explanation of a part of the law of the working of powers for whose origination it cannot, does not really attempt to give account. And yet before the demand be made that the history of creation as told in Holy Scripture should be surrendered as less than perfectly and essentially true, science should be called on to produce a theory more reasonable, more in accord and consistent with its own manifold demands, than the theory of a personal creator and a definite period of creation supplies. This, I think it is no treason to truth to affirm, no system of science has yet done. Whether or no the first chapter of Genesis can be

or ever will be reconciled with the discoveries of physical science, it is surely clear that no system of physical science has yet provided or can be expected to provide a theory of causation, or motive power, which is more reasonable: the whole cosmogony of evolution can offer only to trace and disentangle the links of a chain, the origination and maintenance of which depend on causes that are as much beyond it as they are beyond the reach of any other effort of human thought. The whole array of modern philosophy, negative or positive, hypothetical or inductive, has not got nearer solving the problem of existence than did the schoolmen. But that I must leave: a conjecture which is not disproved is not therefore to be regarded as proved, and a theory which is not proved is not therefore to be regarded as disproved.

As to the historical and literary criticism: one may ask, how can the principles of an art which depends on comparisons be applied to a material which is without a parallel, and where will you find a parallel to this material? Seek it in what are called the sacred books of the East: what do you find there? Except that they are sacred books, nothing comparable with it or parallel to it in spirit or authority. If any of them claim to be older than the Bible, the claim, if proved, would simply amount to a proof that the antiquity claimed for Hebrew literature is no unwarrantable assumption. I am sure that the true result of archæological inquiry as to the history of the most ancient nations, is the proof that, so far as literary possibilities are concerned, there is nothing at all

that would make incredible the antiquity which the earlier scriptures seem to claim and with which, humanly speaking, the evidence of their authenticity is so largely bound up. And are not the older scriptures, nay all of them, and the psalms especially, in all moral and spiritual bearings, as much out of commensurable relation with the latest as with the earliest date assigned to them? If the literary remains of Egypt and Assyria are to any extent older than the Pentateuch, they simply show that there is no impossibility in assigning the authorship to Moses. Older or more modern, they have no element of divine relation. Here and there there may be suggestions of a primitive light, there is, so far at least as they are interpreted, very little of the conviction of sin or righteousness or judgment, nothing of love, redemption, and life eternal. Neither does the rationale of language, considering the necessity of intelligible transmission, which involves an adaptation to the intelligence of the transmitters, supply any decisive element for criticism. We have no right to maintain the continuous miracle of invariable textual exactness for a period of two thousand years, many centuries of which were centuries of confusion and dispersion, during which ancient forms of language may have suffered translation and revision. But I am not aware that much stress is really laid on the minutiae of linguistic variations, which are themselves beyond the range of comparative criticism, or that much categorical dogmatism is based on facts, if there be any such extant, of the history of textual development.

RESULTS OF CRITICISM.

It is in the testing and tracing of historical developments that the greatest efforts of the higher criticism are made, and the results reached, which by some are regarded as most certain, and which to others appear at once most hazardous and destructive. Far be it from me to speak of these with the rashness of dogmatism. Historic criticism is a very patient study, with a very cautious method, very suspensive conclusions. History is itself research; and a research constantly expecting and receiving revision. It must be so, by the very limitation of human knowledge, in the region of matters with which it is most conversant; the very variety of human records differing with the angle of vision, the means, the capacity, and the purpose of the recorder. How much more so when and where the record is one without parallel! The criticism of the Bible from this point of view, the point of historic analogies, is full of risks; full of temptation; conjecture is very alluring, when and where the conjecturer is sure that his guess can only be met by another guess, or by the enunciation that guessing is unphilosophical, the acceptance of old theory being unphilosophical too: the very idea of a guess involves a tacit suspicion of the authority as it stands.

There is a destructive criticism, lawful within certain limits; wherever it has been applied to Holy Scripture itself, it has failed. There is a constructive criticism also within certain limits applicable and lawful; this has been used with

Holy Scripture, and the result has been a sort of confirmation of some of the evidences, the loss of which would have been important. There is a wanton criticism—tentative by destructive action, tentative in constructive operation—against which we have to guard all the more carefully because it is liable to be so used, in irresponsible levity of hypothesis, as to shake the faith of those who listen curiously to it; a trifling with the word of God. It is a grievous thing when, treating conjectures as proved conclusions, men challenge the whole of the accepted evidence of the creeds on the truth of such considerations—most grievous of all, beyond limit of patience or silence in protest, when conjectural criticism is admitted as evidence against the word of Him who is the Truth.

For here the crisis becomes most urgent, the issues most imminent and most fatally important. I cannot imagine greater issues than those which these considerations are likely to force upon us. If the result of the present speculations should be the displacement or rejection of any considerable part of the Jewish law and record, it would involve the re-writing of the whole of Catholic, of Christian theology; and, what is more critical still, such an explanation of the way in which the Old Testament Scriptures are used in the New as would call in question the knowledge and honesty of the writers whom we believe to be inspired, and in some matters endanger the authority of the words reported to be spoken by our Lord.

For we have no doubt that we have at the

present day the Old Testament Scriptures in much the same form as that in which they were before our Saviour in His earthly life; and we have no doubt as to the meaning of the appeal to the Law and the Prophets which He himself used, and which, in argument after argument, is pursued in the writings of St. Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews. This needs no proof, argument, or comment from me: the Law and the Prophets are cited not as an *argumentum ad hominem*, but as a body of evidence of continuous, of eternal counsel.

Is it enough to say we are content to accept the Old Testament, implicitly as our Saviour accepts and uses it; that which it is to Him it shall be to us; in ignorance, in doubt, in perplexity, in variety of applicability, in confusion of meaning, in incoherence of argument, in inappropriateness of quotation; in uncritical and uninquiring acquiescence, we are willing to hold it on His warrant? There is something to be said for such a loyal, trustful acceptance, but it is scarcely a fulfilment of the recommendation to search the Scripture for evidence, or for reproof, or doctrine, or correction, or instruction in righteousness. Still as to special phases of questioning it must be practically sufficient for many minds; and beyond there is no room for appeal:—

“What His Word doth make it,
That I believe and take it.”

But practically the matter cannot rest here. If our Saviour Himself is supposed to be charged with using as evidence matter that is not evidence,

either by intentional perversion or hazardous interpretation, and such charge is proved, then His authority falls to the ground, and we are of all men the most miserable. No Christian can tolerate such a supposition, and none do attempt it. Losing hold on Him as the Truth, we lose our hold on Him and truth together. But here comes in the speculation about the limitation of our Lord's knowledge, and the interpretation of the word in the Epistle to the Philippians, which, in the Authorised Version is read, "made Himself of no reputation," and in the Revised Version, "emptied Himself." On St. Paul's use of this word, as I need not tell you, a formulated idea has been raised that threatens to affect the most essential doctrines connected with the Incarnation: and our Lord is supposed accordingly to have, in becoming man, divested Himself of certain powers which He had with the Father, of almightiness and all-knowledge, so far as the exercise of them through His human nature could, or could not, be supposed to be possible.

κένωσις:

That such can be the direct and proper meaning of the word "emptied Himself" in the passage cited, I cannot, notwithstanding the array of authority with which I may be pressed, at all admit. There must be a parallel between the example of our Lord's action and our duty which it is cited to illustrate. There is in fact no parallel whatever between such a κένωσις as that which I

have described and that by which it is in our power to imitate the Lord Jesus, as we are exhorted to do upon this principle. It is self-surrender, self-effacement, and humiliation for the sake of others, that we are to attempt to practise—not the limitation of our power of helping them, but the devotion of our whole self for them, as He devoted Himself for us.

It is, to my mind, very incidentally and not at all appropriately that this expression is pressed into the service of the doctrine of limitation. It does, however, illustrate it so far as to give an instance of something which the Son of God becoming man, for us men and for our salvation, did give up; who when He was rich for our sake became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich. And so far it does illustrate the theory of limitation, but only so far. Nor ought it ever to be used as the keyword of a theory with which it has so little to do: or as the decisive proof of a doctrine which if it were intended to be taught could not safely be left to an isolated text.

That our blessed Lord in the Incarnation did, by His own determinate counsel, one with that of the Father and the Holy Spirit through whom He offered Himself without blemish, place Himself under conditions by which habitually he regulated the exercise of His divine power in and through His humanity, I think is a matter of unquestioned Catholic doctrine—an habitual self-restraint put upon the exercise of those powers of fulness of the Godhead which dwell in Him bodily; a restraint upon the display of the treasures of wisdom

and knowledge which are all in Him, hidden whilst He was with us, but never suspended or laid aside, never dissembled or repudiated, a *πλήρωμα* with which *κένωσις* has no common term or element. Whenever and wherever it is said of our Lord that He could not do this or that, or that this or that which He had with the Father was not His own to give, the expression can certainly be interpreted as meaning that such exercise of will or power was incompatible with the conditions under which He had placed Himself; and the same interpretation applies to all expressions in the Gospel which imply any change, or development of purpose, or exercise of desire in prayer on the part of Him who is, in His divine nature, unchangeable and beyond all limitation of foreknowledge of will; even to the last words of identification with us, *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*

But the limitation of knowledge is a very different thing from the limitation of the exercise of power. Power itself has its essence *in posse*, its manifestation in exercise of will; knowledge has its essence *in esse*. We cannot, in our thought, define or intelligently explain away the knowledge of the Lord Incarnate. We cannot conceive that He could have knowledge and not use it, as He could have power and not exercise it; His omniscience is of the essence of the personality in which manhood and Godhead united in Him.

With this belief I feel that I am bound to accept the language of our Lord in reference to the Old Testament Scriptures as beyond appeal. Where He says that Moses and the Prophets wrote or

spoke to Him, and the report of His saying this depends on the authority of His Evangelist, I accept His warrant for understanding that Moses and the Prophets did write and speak about Him, in the sense in which I believe that He means it. Where He speaks of David in spirit calling Him Lord, I believe that David in spirit did call him Lord, and I am not affected by doubts thrown on the authorship of the 110th Psalm, except so far as to use His authority to set those doubts aside.

The matter is more difficult when we look at the one passage in which the Son is understood to declare His own ignorance of a matter which the Father hath kept in His own power. For the inquiry as to the meaning of the words would lead us into very high and transcendental regions, and yet the Church has lived for nineteen centuries and believed patiently without having them explained. The question turns on an idea quite different from that in the other case. It was quite within the limits of possibility for Jesus, or indeed for any mere man, to know whether Moses wrote Deuteronomy or David wrote any of the psalms; without any exercise of divine knowledge or power He might know this by tradition, by historical evidence, by critical or diplomatic skill. But the knowledge of the coming of the day of the Lord, "Of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father," is a matter quite beyond us. The words are surpassingly strong; the powers are in an ascending scale—no one—not even the angels, not the Son; as if even the Son in His divinity above

the angels, not lower as in His humanity, had yet something to be shown Him by the Father, to whom He, begotten before all worlds and being of one substance with Him, still appeals as the one source of all being, as well as of all authority, power, and knowledge. We do not venture to put such an interpretation on the words, we would rather stand in awe and sin not: we would veil our faces in our absolute ignorance of the method and character of divine knowledge. For we cannot even see how the Father's perfect knowledge of a point, the fixedness of which would seem to limit His divine freedom of action, His liberty to alter it, can be reconciled with His perfect power: we cannot see how we are to evaluate the common measure by which the divine way of knowing, the divine power of determining, can be compared with any way of knowing or determining that is within our reach. We cannot see how our knowledge, conditioned and made intelligible, possible, only under terms of time and space, can be made to translate a sort of knowledge in which no such terms can be supposed to limit affinity. The words as understood by those to whom they were spoken were a simple denial that it was within the conditions of the work of Incarnation that the day and hour should be revealed. To us they mean thus much more, even the Son could not translate the Father's determination into words or language of our knowledge. And He does not say, "I know not;" but, as it is no function of the Fatherhood to judge, when He has committed all judgment unto the Son, so it is no function of the

Sonship to know that which the Father hath kept in His own power; as "to sit on My right hand or on My left is not Mine to give." Although "what things soever the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise; for the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth."

The doctrine, then, of the perfect possession but habitual restraint of His divine powers by the Son of Man during the thirty years of His life on earth, does not allow of any imputation of ignorance or incapacity. If such imputation be once admitted, notwithstanding all argumentative safeguards and compensating considerations, the great Gospel of Grace and Salvation is touched on its keystone, and on whomsoever it falls it shall grind him to powder. Grant it—then, could Jesus of Nazareth forget, could He mistake, could He become confused in argument, could He be inconsistent in His teaching, could He be Himself mistaken? Grant it, and what safeguard have we that He did not forget, was not mistaken or confused or inconsistent or Himself deceived? We may ask no end of such questions. If the Saviour were ignorant once, how, when, or where does the limitation of His knowledge cease, and within what terms, beyond that of the self-conditioning of constant self-restraint, does it affect the region of His mediatorial work? Could our loving God—for if all else is a mistake, there must be a true and a living God—could He treat us so?

I will make no apology for saying this to you. I cannot rationalise the doctrine of the Atonement,

or weigh or analyse the blood of the covenant. I cannot draw the articles of the everlasting covenant of the Incarnation. It is only in a very distant way that I can fashion to myself my idea of what my Lord has done, is doing, and will do, as I trust, for me. I cannot read the doctrine of Incarnation as I could a book of Euclid, or the Bible as a poem of Ovid or Milton. But I think that I know whom I have believed. I would that all men could think of Him as I do ; but I cannot bear to anticipate a day when the Church shall cry out to Jesus of Nazareth, Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived ; or to the unknown and unknowable, Why didst Thou let Him deceive Himself and us ? Does it strike you that my words are too strong ? I have indeed run on a long way from my starting-point, but He who will help our unbelief and increase our faith, will surely give us grace also to observe a loving, trustful, courageous patience until all such things are made plain, and He has guided His own into all truth.

THE KENOSIS.

ORDINATION ADDRESSES, *p.* 173.

IT will not, I hope, distract your thoughts from the great matter about which we are directly engaged this week, if I ask you to give your attention for a few minutes this morning to a great question of theology, about which the minds of men are just now grievously exercised. You are, of course, all aware that the recent investigations into the history of the Old Testament, which are known by the name of the Higher Criticism of the Scriptures, have brought some of our leading scholars to what seem to them certain conclusions as to the authorship of various books of the Bible. Some of these conclusions appear very startling, and indeed are difficult to reconcile with the expressions used in the New Testament about those books, and even with the words which our Lord Himself is recorded to have used in citing them. If, it follows, the Evangelists truly record the words that our Lord spoke, and those words, not being a mere condescension to popular ignorance or to the exigency of argument, imply a belief on the Saviour's part in the literary authorship of the

books cited which is contrary to proved or provable decision of criticism, then our Lord Himself was ignorant of the true state of the facts, and His words were formally, if not substantially, fallible. That would mean that, although His use of the citations as the word of God was substantially justified, His ascribing them to the particular writers, Moses, David, and so on, was not. And therefore that our Lord was ignorant. But if He was ignorant of such matters, it must follow that He was not, in His incarnation and life on earth, exempt from ignorance in other matters, although with respect to His moral and doctrinal teaching He must be credited with perfect and infallible knowledge. In illustration of this certain passages are alleged, such as those in which St. Luke describes his increase in wisdom and stature, and St. Mark records his own expression about the knowledge of the Father and ignorance by the angels and by the Son about the day and the hour "when the Son of Man shall be seen coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and glory." It being thus supposed that the knowledge of the Son of Man was limited during His sojourn on earth, it is scarcely a step further to allege that in other respects His divine power was limited, and that accordingly, when He prays, He prays in some uncertainty as to how His prayer will be answered, and, when on the Cross He cries out in His agony, He is under the misgiving that the Father has forsaken Him. I am putting this as briefly as I can, and I must at once advance to what is the apparent inference, namely, that the Son, the

divine word, consubstantial and co-eternal with the Father, and so possessing all knowledge and all power, becoming incarnate for us men and our salvation, emptied Himself of certain qualities of Godhead, divested Himself, by the act of becoming man, of the possession of all such knowledge and power as would be out of the reach of the most exalted and perfect humanity; and so, notwithstanding the union of perfect Godhead and perfect manhood in His one person, made Himself ignorant of certain things which as God He knew, and incapable of certain acts which as God He was almighty to do. This theory of an act of self-emptying, or *κένωσις*, for I may as well use the expression which recent debates have made so sadly familiar to us, and which is based on Philippians ii. 8—this theory of an act of kenosis, understood to involve the consequences which I have described, of ignorance of certain truths, of growth from ignorance to wisdom, of actual uncertainty about the results of prayer, and actual incapacity to do certain acts, the divesting Himself of the consciousness of perfect oneness with the Father, may be opposed to or contrasted with another theory, which I believe to be true, and to be the theory of the Catholic faith. That is that our blessed Lord, God and Man, did during the whole period of the incarnation on earth, as still in His incarnation in heaven, possess consciously all the power and the knowledge which He has with the Father; that His humbling Himself, His kenosis, consisted in His divesting Himself of the exercise of those qualities through the humanity which He assumed; that His growth

implied His learning, as men learn, to know as men know, and to earn experience as men earn it by suffering, learning, knowing, and suffering what as God He knew well, but what, having come to identify Himself with man, He had to learn as man, for us men and for our salvation. Thus in a way He emptied Himself, thus in a way He divested Himself, thus in a way He limited Himself; not, as it seems to me, by a single act of incapacitating, but by a continued exercise of self-restraint or a suspension of the exercise of divine power—a fulfilment of conditions as to the use of powers, and manifestation of glories, in and through humanity, to last until He was, in His humanity, glorified with the glory that He had with the Father before the world was. This theory, for such I must call it, satisfies, so far as we are capable of seeing, the difficulties of the case; if there was anything that the Incarnate Son could not do, the incapacity grew from the condition under which He had resolved to do His work; if there was anything which was not His to give, it was something which, by the condition under which He was keeping His resolution, was reserved for the Father; if there was anything which He could say that He did not know, it was something which, under the condition which He was observing with Himself and the Father, no one, not the angels, nor the Son, the Father only knew; for it is as the Divine Word that the Saviour refuses to speak. How the Father's perfect knowledge of a point, the fixedness of which would seem to us to limit His divine freedom of

action, can be reconciled with it ; how, in fine, we can evaluate the common measure by which God's way of knowing can be compared with our ; what that is which the Father knows and the Son not, it is not ours to ask ; only we know that the Church has lived for 1800 years not knowing, yet trusting, not having seen or heard, but yet believing.

This doctrine of the perfect possession but continued restraint of divine powers by the Son of Man during the thirty years of His mortal life does not allow of any imputation of ignorance or capacity. If such imputation be once admitted, notwithstanding all argumentative safeguards and compensating considerations, the great Gospel of Grace and Salvation is touched, even the corner-stone, and on whomsoever it falls it shall grind him to powder. Such considerations may make the theory safer in the hands of a theological expert, but will, like all such explanations, be ultimately disregarded by those who either follow his conclusions or advance logically upon them. Grant it ; and then, could Jesus of Nazareth forget, could He mistake, could He become confused in argument, could He be consistent in all His teaching, could He be Himself deceived ? Grant it ; and what safeguard have we that He did not forget, was not mistaken, or confused, or inconsistent, or Himself deceived ?

I hear it said, Well, if it is so, let it be so, let God be true and every man a liar ; if the old Gospel be not as we have received it, true, let us abide by our convictions, let us live on our conclusions, let

us see our way to the God who must be above the cloud of doctrine, of theory, aye, of fable that is round about the tradition, the intuition of His existence. Ah, indeed! and is all the glory of the Gospel, all the life of the Church, all the experience of the saints, all the discipline of the past, all the hope of eternity, as it has been given us, to pass away? What has become of the atonement between God and man, for which God became man, and learned man, and sorrowed and suffered and died, realising the nature and the sins and the sorrows and the sufferings of all the human race, and identifying Himself with the race and every individual of the race, as if He Himself were those whom He died for, their sins and their sufferings and their deaths His own. For He was made sin for us who knew no sin, as He learned obedience by suffering, whose will is one with His Father's, so that He need not have suffered to learn to obey, and who in His divine impassibility is beyond suffering, only in His divine love draws near to us and draws us to Him.

Is it not the surpassing mystery of the Incarnation, as the divine mystery of the atonement, that our Lord God, the word, the effulgence of the Father's glory and the express image of His person, becoming man in the ineffable conception, becomes man with the whole forces of Godhead applied to the consummation of His work; not merely becomes a man, to be a representative man, or a pattern man, or an ideal man, or a glorified man, one lamb for one offering of

propitiation for representative sins or exemplar sins, for typical restoration, or even for a transcendental illustration of the love of the Father? The Son of God becomes man; He by whom all things consist, and who upholds all things by the word of His power, in whom are hid, not annulled or suspended, all the treasures of the Godhead, wisdom and knowledge, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead, bodily condescends to go through human experience to fit Himself for a certain end; condescends to learn human learning through the alphabet of childhood, the discipline of boyhood, the experience of manhood; to learn to think as man thinks, to speak as men speak, to love as men love, to hear as men hear, to feel as men feel, to come close to all human experience of sin without sinning. Can there be a greater wonder than for the pure God to be so brought close to human uncleanness, the strong God to be so taught human weakness, the loving God to be so tried with human hatreds, and jealousies, and low aims, and the vanity of vanities? And having so learned us, so identified Himself with us, He offers Himself for us in His great love to the Father, who in the same one great love has given Him for us. Offers Himself, still as the all-knowing and all-seeing, pervading the humanity in which He suffers; offers Himself for you and me and all men, seeing there on the Cross our several souls, our several sins, our several lives and deaths; identifying Himself as if, in His love, our souls, our sins, our lives and deaths were His own. Did He not then and there bear our

sins and carry our sorrows, knowing them as ours, as if they were His own, and in the very plenitude of divine consciousness, experiencing the plenitude of human abjection: My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? And now, He ever liveth, making intercession for those whose lot He has borne and bears.

It is but in a distant way that we can at all taste of the cup that He drank of; it is when we realise the sins and sorrows of those whom we love as life itself, and whose sins are a burden to us greater than our own. Can we, with this idea of the atoning work of the Son, and of the power of the Incarnation by which He made it possible—can we, so taught, bear to think of Him as so limited in His humanity, that He could be ignorant, or forgetful, or confused, or inconsistent, deceived or self-deceiving? Or how, when, and where does the limitations end, and within what terms beyond that of the self-conditioning of constant self-restraint does it affect that region of His work? If He were incarnate once, is He not incarnate still; if He were ignorant ever, how has His humanity come to the perfection of knowledge which those who believe and pray trust in and have trusted ever since St. Stephen saw the heaven opened? If He even could forget, may He forget us still? Nay, if in this life only we have hope in Him we are of all men the most miserable, for His teaching has led us, by the development of all that seems to be best in us, to what is neither more nor less than a delusion or disappointment. Could our

loving God, for there must be a loving God, treat us so?

I make no apology for treating this matter thus. I cannot rationalise the atonement; I cannot weigh or analyse the blood of the covenant. I cannot draw the articles of the everlasting covenant of the Incarnation. It is only in a very distant way that I can fashion to myself my idea of what my Lord has done, and is doing, and will do, as I trust, for me. I cannot read the Incarnation as I would a book of Euclid, or a poem of Ovid or Milton. But I think that I know whom I have believed; I would that all men could think of Him as I do; but I cannot bear to anticipate a day when the Church shall cry out to Jesus of Nazareth, "Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived;" or to the Unknown and Unknowable, "Why didst Thou let Him deceive Himself and us?"

THE MIRACULOUS IN THE BIBLE.

ORDINATION ADDRESSES, *p.* 40.

Do you believe the Holy Scripture as the word of life; as containing in the Old and New Testament, the revelation of the purpose and work of Almighty God through Jesus Christ our Lord?

I think that that is the safe and legal interpretation, but I am well aware that it is not by itself sufficient to cover all the ground which I have tentatively indicated. For it is quite clear that Holy Scripture contains a good deal that only by very indirect construction we can conceive to be an integral part of the revelation of Jesus, and with regard to which he would be a very bold man indeed who would say that he realises in it any distinct relation to the Gospel of our salvation. Your own memories will at once supply you with instances of small minutiae of record as to which you cannot see any inkling of spiritual connection; as, for instance, supposing the wars with the Philistines to be an important part of the training of the chosen people for the state and position in which the Word, the Christ, should come to

them, to His own, and not to be received of them, how should the detail of the Philistines going out by the passage of Michmash add anything to the body or contribute anything to the proof of the revelation? We see that there are many things of this kind which are to our conceptions irrelevant; and although we can well believe, and do believe, that in the contemplation of the Most High there is nothing whatever that is irrelevant, and does not conduce in some way to the fulfilment of His great purpose, we cannot but acknowledge that the relevancy of such incidents is very small contrasted with the greater issues and grander steps of development about which we are told nothing at all, earnestly as we would desire to trace them. And these small points, quite as much as the great cosmic operations which, as detailed to us in the Book of Genesis, and as interpreted by the discoveries of modern science, fall into the class of poetic or traditionary illustration, rather than dogmatic teaching—these, small and great alike, throw us back upon the idea of the gradual character of the Revelations we believe in, and of the possibilities and peculiarities of the agencies which He put thus far within our reach, by written record of men inspired.

The Scripture of the Old Testament is the whole historic literature of the chosen people; framed by men inspired by the Holy Ghost, as far as the inculcation of the law and promise of God from time to time were to be revealed; but we do not imagine either that every detail of their writings was so inspired as to keep them from all

error, or that everything they wrote was equally matter of revelation. Far otherwise. We cannot but believe that their language, even at the highest grade of inspiration, was and must be language intelligible to those who wrote and read, and therefore limited and conditioned by their intelligence ; and the story which they told such as would be possible to carry tradition from generation to generation, with—as in all history—variations and aggregations and inconsistencies of detail which may amount in non-essential things to contradictions.

Nothing but a theory of verbal inspiration which the Church has not asked of us, could, under the conditions of divine teaching, through the law-givers, historians, and prophets of the Old Testament, preclude the existence of such inconsistencies, which the growing criticism of generations far ahead would find its work in readjusting, and, as we say, rectifying and reconciling with the new materials that language and historic discovery find for us.

It is of no use for us to speculate that the Almighty might have chosen other ways of signifying His will to us—of course He might ; nor can we limit the methods by any theorising of our own as to how He could have done it best, and with the least strain on faith ; or how and why faith should come into the operation at all, when it might have been done by seeing and hearing, in one of the countless ways of His versatility, the wonderful counsels of His right hand. It must suffice us that He did choose this way of dealing with us, and that He suffered the revelation of His

purpose to be weighted by the powers and possibilities of the men and times that He chose. It may have been of the necessity of His conditions that the message of life could only be continued and realised in and by means and methods that carried more of temporal and secular interest to a temporal and secular people, like the chosen race, at their best, and at their worst. And this is always to be remembered, that the revelation of God came to a people that did not much care about it, whilst they were living in the very discipline that it was laying on them; and it came not through astrologers, ascetics, or philosophers, but through those whom God appointed as His lawgivers and prophets, as He chose, from all sorts and conditions of life.

However, granting all this, there still remains the consideration, which cannot be left out of our sight in these matters, and which I have mentioned before. We cannot, we cannot possibly, eliminate miraculous and angelical operation from the history of the Old Testament. We cannot look at the Bible history as one that can be divested of miraculous manifestation; we cannot reduce that miraculous manifestation to terms of psychical subjectivity, or ways of relegating unusual phenomena to supernatural agency, when more careful appreciation would have discovered them to be natural. There is no way of making the history of the Bible non-miraculous; the direct agency of God is a primary condition of the simplest apprehension of it. It works in, and through, and to miracle culminating in the greatest of all miracles, without which the Gospel falls into the mere limbo

of pious deceptions by men themselves deceived—the miracle of the Incarnation, of the Resurrection, and the Ascension of the Son of God. “Why should it be thought incredible among you that God should raise the dead?” Why incredible, when the history of one nation was full of providential guidings, and positions and interpositions, quite inconsistent with what were regarded as natural law in the growth and rise and fall of peoples? Why incredible in the view of the history of a people which, for the next two thousand years after St. Paul asked the question, has seen, through experience, the complement of what went before. “Hath God dealt so with any nation?” If this element is to be eliminated from the Old Testament, how much more goes with it, we do not dare to calculate, we would not wish to think.

But for all that, we do not value or regard all recorded miracles alike. I do not imagine that in these days in which the place of the earth in the solar system is fixed on hypothesis mathematically unimpugnable, the most conscientious believer would assert it as a matter of faith, that when the sun stood still over Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, the course of this world was essentially altered; and yet that essential alteration remained unrecorded in the books of the nations, whose first and most ancient steps of knowledge were in the science of the stars. And that is a test illustration to our faith. We should as soon think of reconciling the anomaly by the variations of clocks and watches, and the

computation of true and mean times as we do in travelling by land or by sea. Of such it is absurd to speak seriously. But, in fact, we know that we believe in various things with various kinds and degrees of faith. We believe in the daily quotations of the Stock Exchange with a belief different in kind from that with which we receive the forecasts of the meteorological department. We believe in the doctrines of the Apostles' Creed with a belief very different from that with which we believe the records of St. Paul's journeys, though we have no doubt about the correctness of the details. And, further, we know by experience that the acceptance we accord to the faithful record of chroniclers and historians may be very different from the negative or suspensory creed with which we regard their illustration and interpretation of the things which they believed themselves to record truly.

Analysis, I may say, is an important element in the comparative treatment of experience and analogy. An historian of the eighth, ninth, down to the thirteenth century, records the current of history with names and dates of incontrovertible authority; and we believe in him so thoroughly that we could risk a great deal on his exact accuracy. And the same man, on the same page that he gives us an essential date or decisive particular, will tell us a miraculous story of something that he saw with his own eyes, which we should never think of accepting as possible, and the narration of which we can only welcome with the kind assumption that the man has told us what he thought he saw, and that he himself believed that what he saw.

was what he told us that he saw. Of analysis of such record a great deal has at different times been written, and the accepted conclusion as to the phenomenon is, I think, that such episodes constitute no objection at all to the credibility of the author who has introduced them ; rather, as being the specialities or marks of idiosyncrasy of a sincere writer of limited and, it may be, perverted intellectual insight, they add an element of credibility to the acceptance of faith in so ingenuous an exposé of his own weakness.

Well, we say we believe that he thought he saw something of the kind ; he lived in an atmosphere in which such things were of daily contemplation, doubtless he longed to believe it true, and as doubtless something occurred which he could in such a frame and atmosphere so interpret. But this is a very different thing from believing him or his story. I mention this, however, not for a moment intending a parallel between the most apparently useless and inconsistent of the Old Testament miracles and the fabled miracles of the mediæval saints ; rather to point out that the intermixture of what is incredible to us is no bar to the acceptance, as certain, of that which is credible on the same evidence, and then to make the distinction of the kind and degree of faith which we give to different sorts of narration. I do not say that analysis is always, or indeed ever, easy or perfect, or in many points safe and trustworthy. To some things we pledge our belief on the issues of life and hereafter ; to some we accord our assent as believing them to be quite true, although, if they

were not, it would matter very little to any practical purpose for us; to some we give just the nod of assent. Well, I suppose he meant to tell the truth, and thought he saw what he said he did.

I could not dwell on this were it not that I see, in various regions of modern criticism, an inclination to shut out such a consideration, and to dogmatise about the credibility of authorities, on theories which disregard its equity and cogency; and so the hearts of the simple are shocked and averted, and the peremptory judgments of the sciolist are accepted on his own terms; and so belief is weakened, and the area of faithful acceptance minimised, and the cry comes, How little need I believe to justify myself in saying that I believe at all.

It is very possible, very probable, that some such questionings as I have referred to have presented themselves to some of you. Let me add one counsel. Believe in the Lord Jesus with all your heart, believe in His word and His promise; put your whole trust and confidence in Him, ready to stake your eternal life on His truth and faithfulness, *but* remember that faith is not sight, and the methods of proof to which faith is amenable are not the methods of mathematical analysis. You may be as certain of the articles of the Creed as you are of the proofs of Euclid, but the certainty is not the same sort of certainty, and no intelligent being will look at the promise of eternal life as he looks on the forty-seventh proposition of the first book, which is, as you probably remember, one of

the most beautiful theorems of the whole body of the elements. There is faith, but it is not the substance of the things hoped for, or the evidence of things not seen. In the field of doctrine, of spiritual faith, resting on the word of Christ and His finished work, both the nature of the faith and its hold on the things with which it is confident, its earnestness, its patience, its tolerance, the agency of the Blessed Spirit individually quickening, and through the voice of the Church defining the articles that are necessary to the true appreciation of the revelation of God in the face of Jesus Christ, are the key to all difficulty that we wish to overcome. He will guide you unto all truth, all the more intelligently as you seek the way of it, not grudging, or assuming safe infallibility, but showing, loving, working to enter the fulness of that which we earnestly desire to see, and to be justified among the children of wisdom.

THE STUDY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

ORDINATION ADDRESSES, *p.* 147.

I DESIRE to use the few minutes devoted to the address this morning for an attempt to put before you my idea of the frame and attitude in which we all ought to approach the study of the word of God, and in which it is especially needful for us to train ourselves, who are by our office bound to the constant practice of that study, and have to answer the questions and to some extent direct the work of those who give themselves to the same. In what I am going to say I do not intend any specific or exclusive reference to the subject of what is called the Higher Criticism of the Holy Scriptures. It is very possible that it is in reference to that form of study that my counsels to you may have the greatest practical importance, but what I shall say will have a wider and more general intention of application.

I will begin with laying it down as a fact that the Bible cannot be treated as any other book. First, it is not like any other book ; no other book comes to us with a claim authorised by the

Church of our Baptism as containing the word of God, or containing so constant assertion of its claim to be heard as the word of God ; or as cited, one part of it by another part, by a sort of mutual testimony, as of divine authority ; or as consistently upheld by the long consent of the Christian ages as the law and the testimony. So it comes to us, and it is not reduced to the level of other books even by the complete repudiation of every point of this claim at the hands of those who would treat it otherwise. This means that it is to us a paramount witness of truth ; if it fail, if the Lord Jesus Christ is not in it and through it all, the key and binding-string and central truth that holds it all together, then the result of its promulgation is the most ghastly of all delusions and disappointments, by which all the best instincts of human nature are repelled and belied, a phantasm by which he who would deceive us would be no fit object of worship, even if he should exist at all. A book which comes to us thus cannot be like any other.

Secondly, our own relation to it is such that we could not treat it so. We have been brought up in profound respect for and love of it ; we have been taught to base all our faith in the unseen world upon it ; our convictions or anticipations of eternity ; our belief in immortality ; our ideas of the government of the world ; of the existence of God ; of His law of life, right, and virtue ; of our own subjection to, and inability to keep that law ; of the love that provided a way to forgiveness and restoration ; of the work of the

atonement, of the incarnation and the sacrifice, of the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment, of the destiny of our own souls and of theirs without whom happiness in its true perfection is altogether inconceivable;—in a word, our knowledge, if we call it knowledge, our apprehension, if we dare not call it knowledge, of all that is desirable, hopeful, and other than miserable in this life and that which is to follow—our very simplest ideas of virtue and happiness, justice, purity, and truth. All has come to us through the teaching of this book, or through the teaching of those who based their teaching upon it, through the Church which carries it open in her hand as her witness. It is impossible for those who have been so taught to put themselves into a neutral or impartial position regarding it without such a strain, such a wrench of mental and moral force, as drives them past the central station of fair judgment. The effort that alone can carry us so far carries us further. The very attempt to leave the post of affirmation carries us so far beyond the point of indifference as to set us near, and in progress towards negation. In ordinary language indifference towards Holy Scripture means disregard of it. We cannot treat it as any other book; if we try, we find that we are treating it as no other book; as far the other way as we started on the other; and indeed it is the fact that it is like no other that has led the critics to apply to it methods of arbitrary and conjectural criticism which, applied to Greek or Roman or even Anglo-Saxon literature, would have been laughed out of court.

We are forced in the recoil as far in the direction of negation as we started in the direction of affirmation; no tenable standing-ground between belief and unbelief. This, I think, is certain of our own experience, and it is not uncharitable to say that where men have flattered themselves into the belief that they can do it, it has been at the penalty of self-deception, which not all their professions of love and honour have been able to keep innocuous to themselves or free from great danger to those who are led by them. The claims of the Bible and our own relation to it alike make the attitude of indifference impossible, untenable, intolerable. But there is something to be said on the other hand. First, the Bible, although speaking with authority, speaks with an authority that contemplates proof and deliberate acceptance; second, we, unless our acceptance is to be servile and abjectly unintelligent, are bound to do our utmost to realise both what we believe and how and why we believe it. That is to say, the Book itself recognises, and we by our very constitution of thought and affection are bound to the exercise of what it recognises, the necessity of judgment, the proving and holding fast. If these two considerations now formed a dilemma, the only possible attitude of thought would be an agnosticism, which long before this would have set the Bible and all religious ideas drawn from it outside the region of practical questioning. Either it must be accepted with the mechanical receptiveness of an empty vessel, or it must be treated as on a level with a review article; it must long ago have lost the hold on the heart

which, humanly speaking, is the result of the experience of nineteen centuries of faith. The two considerations do not constitute such a dilemma ; so much is clear to our apprehension of what is going on in the world now, in commentary, in controversy, in exposition, in application.

We will now ask what is the attitude of approach. I may perhaps arrange the counsels that I offer under two heads: the approach requires a moral or spiritual effort, and a mental or intellectual one. I prefer the words spiritual and mental, but as I am not a philosopher, or speaking to philosophers, I shall not try to restrict myself to philosophical expressions. There is to be an effort of the will, the heart, and soul, and spirit, and there is to be an exercise of the mind, its logical, critical faculties.

First, the student of Holy Scripture must approach it with a living and loving sense of what he owes to it ; it is the exponent of the influences by which his spiritual life has been guided to the point at which he approaches the study ; it would not be a matter of consideration with him at all if it were not so. He is a religious man, and this book is the witness of the religion which has made him what he is, and made him also desirous of growth into knowledge. His attitude is of grateful acceptance and, correspondingly, of prayer for guidance. He holds the book with a loving trust, a loving, trustful receptiveness ; whatever mental trials await him, whatever spiritual struggles he may anticipate, he hold his Bible as the gift of his Lord's love, on the authority of his

Saviour's use of the Old Testament and sanction of the New ; on the evidence of the Church, which is to him the pillar and ground of the truth. He comes, then, with the desire to prove true what his experience and education, what we humbly believe the guidance of the Holy Spirit within him, disposes him to believe to be true. It is with a loving trust in the Giver and the gift of the divine word, a trust implicit as loving, that he is using and proving as the Lord Himself would have him use and prove, and as the Holy Spirit is leading.

Next, the attitude spiritually is one of patience : Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth. He longs to hear more, to hear more clearly, to see the spirit through the letter, to get to comprehend with a clear comprehension, to reconcile all difficulties ; and yet he is conscious that both by the imperfectness of his own powers and the incompleteness of his own faith, as well as by the possible reticence of Almighty power in revelation, there is much that he must wait for : seeming contradictions that he cannot harmonise ; promising vistas of loving anticipation that for the present seem to him to close in obscurity ; records of events and prophecies of events that need to be brought into correlation with each other, and with the general purpose of revelation, and with the course of the history of the Church and the world, which tease and try him, as they have done the ages before him, and will, it may well be, continue to do so until the end come. His attitude is of patience ; it is a patience that will not be overcome either by the impetuosity of love or by intolerance of

suspense. He will not say, "Except I see the print of the nails, I will not believe;" but "I will not let Thee go until Thou bless me." I will worship the God whom I know as an unknown God, rather than refrain from the worship which I know to be true, scarcely knowing why. "I will wait for Thy loving kindness;" I must wait, but it shall not be without. "I will wait in the midst of Thy Temple;" I will wait as those who watch for the morning.

And, need I add, the fruit of trustful patience is humility, and the result of it is the increase of the power of trustful receptiveness: they that eat Me shall yet be hungry, and they that drink Me shall yet be thirsty; and the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. The knowledge so sought has ever-developing application. The sense of one's own fallibility in faith and apprehension is an element of the humility of the loving receptiveness. I would know more, that I may love better, and, loving better, may try to be more like Him who in His word, and by His word, reveals Himself. May God grant to you and to me the power to make the will exert itself under these conditions. I might have summed it all up in the one expression—the attitude of prayer, desiring, waiting, trusting.

Now of the mental or intellectual feature or side or aspect of study: Given a book which, as I have said, on its own claims, and on the ground of our personal relation to it, is unlike any other book. How can we criticise

it? Does criticism require a position of such indifference as by itself amounts to unfriendliness? Must all criticism begin from the angle of negation? or how about the parallels and analogies on which the laws of true criticism are based? or how about the nature of the proof which is to be demanded, and with or without which the mind of the student, studying trustfully and lovingly, is or is not to be contented? How, too, about the theories of inspiration and the questions of scientific, literary, and historic criticism? And what of the relation between spiritual and devotional study and the results of those sorts of questionings? Far be it from any of us to say that these questions are simple, or that it is easy to formulate an answer that will satisfy all. There is a criticism which analyses and distinguishes in the hope of making that which is obscure in belief clear and coherent. There is a criticism which, starting from an un-trustful standing-point, calls everything into question and assumes the truth of every negative argument, the equal cogency of every new conjecture. Need I caution you against this latter? However, first, we must remember that, as different subject matters are only capable of, or amenable to, different methods of proof, we must not look for equal logical cogency in all conclusions from the tests or evidences applied to the Bible, either in its several parts or as compared with other books. It is only in mathematical matters that perfect demonstration can be asked for, and the Bible is not a mathematical book.

The nearest approach to such demonstration in other subjects belongs to what is now called natural science, and some of the weapons alleged against the theories of inspiration of the Bible are drawn from the scientific armoury. With respect to these, I will only say that the Bible uses scientific terms only for the purpose of helping a revelation of the power and energy and will of the Almighty, a revelation that must, to be a revelation at all, be made in language intelligible to those to whom it was made, and which, accordingly, must be open to the limitations of human speech and language. As it is a growing revelation, it is liable to variety of interpretation as knowledge of scientific matters increases, and that interpretation is susceptible of readjustment as time goes on. The original word, cleared of the incrustation of successive interpretations, is simple, and its purpose being admitted, lies outside of scientific criticism; and yet before the demand can be made that it should be surrendered as less than perfectly true, science should be called on to produce a theory more reasonable, more in accord and consistent with its own manifold demands than the theory of a personal creator and a definite period of creation supplies. This, I think it no treason to truth to affirm, no system of science has yet satisfactorily done. Whether or no the Mosaic account of creation can or ever will be reconciled with the discoveries of physical science, it is surely clear that no system of physical science has yet provided or can be expected to provide a theory of causation or motive power which is

more intelligible or reasonable than that of the first chapter of Genesis ; the whole cosmogony of evolution can offer only to trace and disentangle the links of a chain, the origination and maintenance of which depend on causes that are as much beyond it as they are beyond the reach of any other effort of human thought. The whole array of modern philosophy, negative or positive, hypothetical or inductive, has not got nearer to the solution of the problem of existence than the schoolmen of the middle ages. But that I must leave ; a conjecture which is not disproved is not therefore proved, and a theory which is not proved is not therefore disproved.

As to the historic and literary criticism, on which I do not intend to detain you now, one may ask, how can you apply the principles of such an art to a subject which is without a parallel ? And where will you find a parallel to this ? Seek it in the sacred books of the East, what do you find there ? Nothing to be compared with it or parallel to it except the fact that they are sacred books, which, if they claim to be older than the Bible, simply prove that its antiquity is not an impossible one ; if they are more modern, they prove that they have no atom of the spirit in which we recognise inspiration. I am very sure that the true result of archæological inquiry as to the history of the most ancient nations is the proof that, so far as literary possibilities are concerned, there is nothing at all that could refute the claim to which the Hebrew literature, as we call it, makes or has made for it to the antiquity on

which its authenticity so largely depends. If the literatures of Egypt and Assyria are older than the Pentateuch, they would prove that there was no impossibility in assigning the authorship to Moses; if the Sanscrit and Chinese books are older or younger, they prove only that the spirit that was in the prophets is not in them. Here and there there may be a spark of primitive light, but there is nothing whatever of the conviction of sin and righteousness and judgment. Nor does literature prove anything of importance if we recognise that the very necessity of intelligible transmission involves an adaptation to the intelligence of the transmitters.

Of historic, as distinct from properly literary criticism, I would be the last man in the world to speak with the rashness of dogmatism. Historical criticism is a very patient study, with a very cautious method, very suspensive conclusions. History itself is a research, and a research constantly expecting and receiving reversion; and it must be so by the very limitation of human knowledge in the region of matters with which it is most conversant, the very variety of human records differing with the angle of vision, the means and capacity of every recorder. The criticism of the Bible from this point of view, the point of historic analogies, is full of risks; conjecture is very tempting when and where the conjecturer is sure that his guess can be met only by another guess, or by the enunciation that guessing is unphilosophical, if the acceptance of old theory is unphilosophical too. The very idea of the guess involves a tacit

suspicion of the authority as it stands. But I will not puzzle you or myself with abstract terms. There is a destructive criticism ; such criticism is lawful within certain limits ; wherever it has been applied to the Holy Scriptures it has essentially failed. There is a constructive criticism which, within a definite area, is lawful too ; this has been applied to Holy Scripture, and has resulted in a sort of confirmation of some of the evidences that have been regarded as important. There is a criticism, destructive by conjecture and constructive by conjecture, intended to supply the place of that which is destroyed. Against such, its methods and its conclusions, I would warn all who wish for the confirmation of the faith, whether of themselves or others. It is a wanton, irresponsible sort of temptation to shake other men's faith by vain conjectures. We can, we will, we must have no trifling with the word of God. It is a worse thing, terribly worse, when, treating conjectures as conclusions, we challenge the whole of the accepted evidence of the creeds on the truth of such considerations ; worst of all, inconceivably, beyond limit of patience or silence from protests when we admit conjecture as against the word of Him who is the Truth.

The mental attitude of the student is like his spiritual attitude, one of trust, patience, and humility. He comes to the study prepared to dispense with mathematical demonstration ; prepared to be content with suspensive conclusions ; prepared to listen to without accepting plausible analogies ; prepared to be puzzled with unreasonable

conjectures within the area of sincere criticisms. But he comes also with his mental attitude determined, as I have said, and in a faith which he prays and waits to have assured. It is a reasoning and a reasonable faith, but it is a faith notwithstanding, not a mere intellectual apprehension ; itself of the substance of things hoped for, of the evidence of the things not seen : the assurance of the things hoped for, which shall be demonstrated and determined, reconciled and explained ; the proving of things not seen, which, when they shall be seen face to face, will have solved all questions.

P. 51. I am going to speak now on your making Holy Scripture your chief study. I am not apprehensive that any of you have offered yourselves here without such a belief, purpose, persuasion, and promise ; but I think it very likely that you may have experienced some difficulty or some weakness as to the last point, the study of them. Now nothing can be allowed in excuse for the neglect of this duty : no evangelising zeal, no busy engrossment of good works, no amount even of simple devotion will entitle any of us to a dispensation from it. It must be done, time must be found for it, nothing must be suffered to stand in its way. It is by study of the Scriptures that the simple become wise unto salvation, and that the greatest scholars learn their constant need of fuller progress into perfect knowledge. The study teaches the ignorant that even to them it is given to know, and the wisest that there is very much of which they must still be ignorant. As the revelation of

God's will, as the divinely recorded history of experiences which the divine record alone can interpret, as the story of the world's redemption and as containing the rules for its reconquest and restoration, the Holy Scriptures are the Great Guide Book and treasury of all the ministers of God. On that I need hardly expatiate. The duty of study is as plain as the necessity of it; you ought and you must, by becoming familiar with the language of God, try to become familiar with the spirit that is in the words, so that you shall come to view men, and sin, and righteousness, and your own selves as with God's eyes; seeing through false excuses, discarding false mediums, casting aside false exaggerations and attenuations, and by sympathy with the Spirit of the Master entering into the true burdens and troubles of His servants in heart and mind. You ought and must try to realise to yourselves the grounds of belief, and the history of the doctrines of grace as the Bible exhibits them. You must learn to bring things new and old out of the good treasure which you are daily amassing within. That is, simply, you cannot teach, or preach, or visit your people to advantage, or maintain your own spiritual health, or render to him who asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, without constant refreshing and sustaining study. Now how are you to get time for that? Some of you are called to work among large populations where there is much demand for service and visiting, and probably much necessary business in the way of teaching or conduct of business. It does seem perhaps exacting

if I were to say to a curate of Crewe or of Birkenhead,¹ You must find time to work every day at your Greek Testament, or at some patristic commentary, or some really standard work in illustration of the Bible ; and by this I do not mean such study as will enable you to pick up taking points for sermons, or mere tricks or dodges for springing surprises on your congregation, or enabling you to pose before them as men who have a great knowledge of things that you have not a great knowledge of, or to quote familiarly fathers and commentators whom you have never read. You will not do that. It is that you may strengthen your own hold on the truth, and perseveringly applying to the letter not only your own natural acumen, but the powerful light of other men's experience, may qualify yourself to speak out of the *heart*, not only out of the head or the fancy, and speaking out of the heart, speak to the heart, and not only to the head or fancy of your people.

The study of the Bible will make men sincere preachers, and, by the grace of God, effective preachers too, but only on the condition that they seek to know it first for themselves and then to give their best to their people. Practically, I think you should secure your time for study by early rising. The clergyman's day ought to end at ten o'clock ; it is not wise to keep your people out late, or to rob yourselves of the chance of rest by late reading. Early rising, moderately early rising, will give you two hours a day for reading,

¹ This Address was also given to Candidates for Ordination at Chester.

or an hour and a half for reading and half an hour for sermon-writing. You may think this a small allowance for the latter, and to some people perhaps it is too small, but sermons to be preached with effect must be written with consecutiveness, and however hard and long the subjects may be, thought over before you take pen in hand ; when you begin to write you should write on straight. A sermon that has taken a week to think out, that has been on your mind during all your visiting,—and your visiting will scarcely fail to bring home to you every week the bearings of a well-chosen text,—a sermon that you have thought out well, will be all the better for being quickly written. That, however, vastly important as it is, is not the point ; the point is that you maintain your belief, your intelligence, your sincerity, and the many-sidedness, the thoroughness of your knowledge by careful, prayerful study. This has its great reward in itself—it is purifying and exalting morally as well as intellectually ; and it will come, as you give yourselves to it, to have not only the charm which every study faithfully followed has, but an especial charm as it exercises the highest faculties of mind and spirit on those highest subjects which they are capable of approaching, and for the due contemplation of which they were made. In no study is it more true that to him that hath shall more be given, more power, more insight, more sense of fitting application, more true pleasure as we enter into the higher regions of perfect love and light.

THE PSALMS.

ORDINATION ADDRESSES, *p.* 78.

THE history of the preparation of the world for the Redeemer's mission is written, not as a distinct and paragraphed concordant of heavenly powers with one another, not as a constitutional manifesto, or charter, or report of a great transaction, but as God vouchsafed step by step to reveal it to those who waited for His salvation in Israel. The devotional parts of the Old Testament, the Psalms, and the hymns of the prophetic books are the revelation of the mind of God through the life and experience of those of His servants who came and desired to come nearest to Him. When David tells us that his heart showed him the wickedness of the ungodly, or that his heart exclaimed, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek," we know that for his admonition and for our instruction through his experience, God had revealed to him both the evil of the evil heart and the true way in which the aspirations of the penitent can make their way to His ears. The Psalms are in one respect the most remarkable book in the Bible, and therefore the strongest example of the truth that I want to set forcibly

before you. For can anything be more strange than that the songs of the wild, wilful, wanton outlaw, whom yet God, knowing how constantly and ever even in his sins he had set Him before his eyes, calls the man after His own heart,—the songs of the wild, wilful outlaw, written in circumstances and under conditions so various and so different from those possible in other ages and other lands, should yet become the songs of the Universal Church both in the house of her pilgrimage and in the bearing of her message to every sort and condition of men throughout the whole world that the Son of David died to ransom?

In the wonderful insight and variety of the Psalms, and even especially of those of which no criticism has availed to rob the son of Jesse, there is a key to all self-knowledge, and in that self-knowledge a guide to all experience touching the hearts of men. And I doubt not that it was by a divine instinct, as well as by blessed experience, that the ancient Church, and our own in conformity with the ancient usage, made the daily repetition of a large portion of the Psalter a part of the proper devotions of her ministers. No man who has not tried can at all realise how the practice gives a tone and colouring, a seasoning and flavour to the work of every day that has begun on such wholesome fare of spiritual nurture. You will see by what I have said of the Psalms what I mean. The Scriptures contain the mind of God for man's reading; history as read with His eyes, philosophy as read with His eyes, devotion as transfused by His Spirit: not, of course, as completely or as

clearly as if it were written with His finger, but as, considering the circumstances and powers of those who wrote it, and the conditions under which the writing is possible, conveys to us the spirit, the sympathy, the wise judgment, the grounds of faith, in the holding of which faith differs from sight.

Of course, what I have said of the Old Testament is still more applicable to the New, the direct revelation of which, in the mouth of Him who worked the salvation of mankind, and of the apostles and evangelists who had received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit Himself, seems to come more immediately, as well as more clearly, to us than do the lessons of even one whose heart we know as well as we know David's. The recommendation or exhortation of the paragraph before us seems to me to contain advice both for the devotional and for the exegetical study of the Scriptures; the devotional to be especially pursued in conformity with the direction that every clergyman shall read the daily office every day in his church: an obligation which, I need hardly say, no disuse of the practice can really be interpreted to dispense. Those who have tried it know, as I said, what a strength and stay, what a suggestive fountain of holy thoughts, and what a supply of good influences a daily service is to those who are so happy as to enjoy it: a daily revelation to the open mind of something more of the mind of Christ. The elaborate and persistent study of the same word, with lexicon and grammar and commentary, as well as with prayer for enlightenment,

is likewise an obligation that no young clergyman can do without, and from which the oldest and most experienced will be constantly gaining broader and fuller light ; and I trust that all of you will, from the beginning, make a point of securing some regular section of every day for leisure to do this. What the Bishop says about the exclusive study of the Scriptures must, I think, in these days be interpreted with some liberal construction. The clergyman of these days is expected, and rightly expected, to be abreast of the society in which he lives in other subjects besides the study of Scripture ; but for all that, the study of the Scripture stands first, and a long way the first, of all in his list ; and every other subject must be pursued with the same desire to justify the wisdom of the highest, that prompts the study of the word of God. Take the word of one who has spent, it may well be, too much time on other reading : all reading that is worth the name of study can be, and should be, made to subserve the great object of your lives henceforth ; for all knowledge comes from and converges to the same great purpose, the proof and publishing of the truth that is of the glory of Him who can in all these things make His will clear to us.

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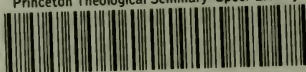
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